

## BALZAC'S *LE PÈRE GORIOT* AND DICKENS'S *DOMBEY AND SON*: A COMPARISON

by Margaret Sobel

Honoré de Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* (1834) and Charles Dickens's *Dombey and Son* (1846) offer intriguing parallels which could serve as points of departure for a full comparative study of these two authors. Written when Balzac and Dickens were the same age (34), occupying analogous positions at the threshold of each writer's maturity, *Le Père Goriot* and *Dombey and Son* illustrate all the stylistic, psychological, and spiritual preoccupations which were to control the work of both men. The two books contain a number of common elements, some to be found throughout the novels of Balzac and Dickens and some which also reflect concerns of nineteenth-century European fiction in general. For example, we notice the father and child relationship, the modern phenomenon of the city, and the conflict between the individual and society (an external theme now exacerbated by the evolution of industrial civilization). Inherent in all these questions is the problem of the precarious balance between private and public morality.

These broader themes of *Le Père Goriot* and *Dombey and Son* will obviously come into play in the destinies of the two title Fathers, Jean-Joachim Goriot and Paul Dombey. However, in the limited framework of this paper I will concentrate on these two men as contrasting studies in the danger of "unnatural" obsessions. Balzac and Dickens present cases in which natural instincts are the key to the character's fate. In the instance of Goriot the instincts are immoderately exaggerated, whereas with Dombey they are totally repressed. Both writers take the same underlying theme — the need for every human being to reach a judicious accommodation with nature — and then proceed to explore opposite sides of the issue. Goriot is destroyed because he allows natural sentiment, in his case paternal love, to assume the quality of passion. For Balzac, passion is far more than an intangible psychological aura; it seems to become a material substance which is almost always fatal to those individuals who make it the center of their existence. In a significant reversal of the pattern, Dombey was "shipwrecked" (to borrow a common phrase from *Dombey and Son*) because he consistently refused to acknowledge the validity of human feelings in others and in himself.

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## I

In addition to being perhaps the most popular of all of Balzac's novels, *Le Père Goriot* has been singled out as a work of unrivaled importance in relation to Balzac's entire "oeuvre." *Le Père Goriot* is at once the distillation of all of Balzac's efforts up to this point and the key to the future elaboration of *La Comédie humaine*. Balzac's emerging mastery of thematic and stylistic elements is brilliantly demonstrated, for example, by the fact that this is the first of his novels to apply the principle of recurrent characters. The unity of Balzac's fictional world passes from intuition to realization.

*Le Père Goriot* was first placed in the category of *Scènes de la vie parisienne* only to be reclassified in 1845 among the *Scènes de la vie privée*. This hesitation to classify on Balzac's part has been echoed ever since by conflicting views as to the identity of the main character. Considered as one of the "Parisian" novels, *Le Père Goriot*'s principal figure would have to be Eugène de Rastignac, who leaves his life as a poor but honorable student in Mme. Vauquer's squalid boarding house for the exhilarating life of a "corsaire aux gants jaunes," conquering society through astute and cynical alliances with women. Along the way, in a variation of the "bildungsroman" tradition, Rastignac gleans valuable lessons from the arch-villain Vautrin, who defies society through revolt, and from Goriot, whose inordinate love for his daughters kills him when their filial affection, vitiated by society's lures, cannot begin to respond to his monomaniacal needs. The inclusion of *Le Père Goriot* among the novels of private life could be justified by the intensity with which Balzac portrays the "martyrdom" of this "Christ de la Paternité."

Upon reading *Le Père Goriot* one could most readily conclude that Goriot is a tragic victim of filial ingratitude. As his daughters Delphine and Anastasie grow from spoiled childhood to selfish adulthood, they exploit him financially with increasing rapacity. They could even be blamed for his death: Goriot is physically destroyed for lack of sustenance. This view of Goriot as a sublime figure obliterated by the callous and petty world is the one held by young Rastignac:

"Mme. de Beauséant s'enfuit, celui-ci [Goriot] se meurt, dit-il. Les belles âmes ne peuvent pas rester longtemps en ce monde. Comment les grands sentiments s'allieraient-ils, en effet, à une société mesquine, petite, superficielle?"<sup>1</sup>

The "belles âmes" are inevitably crushed. On the first page of the novel Balzac describes the instrument of their annihilation:

Le char de la civilisation, semblable à celui de l'idole de Jaggernat, à peine retardé par un cœur moins facile à broyer que les autres et qui enraie sa roue l'a brisé bientôt et continue sa marche glorieuse. (p. 848)

Society at large now assumes the role of fatal destiny grinding men down under its inexorable force.

At this point attention should be called to the close identity in Balzac's mind between Paris, the world ("le monde"), and society. He even raises the question of whether or not his drama would be understood beyond Paris (p. 847). In any case, more than one figure explicitly instructs us that Paris/"le monde" is an infamous cesspool (pp. 886 and 911). Everyone is familiar with Balzac's famous analogy between Humanity and Zoology formulated in the 1842 "Avant Propos" to *La Comédie humaine*. L. F. Hoffmann has documented all occurrences of animal imagery in *Le Père Goriot* and his findings allow him to assert that:

L'univers du *Père Goriot* est une véritable transposition du monde naturel, où chacune lutte pour la vie avec les moyens dont l'a pourvue la nature . . . un climat est ainsi créé; climat brutal et impitoyable où l'intelligence devient instinct et l'égoïsme cruauté.<sup>2</sup>

Vautrin had already explained that Goriot was "un homme à passion," one of those creatures who "chaussent une idée et n'en démordent pas" (p. 884). Specifically, after the death of his wife:

. . . le sentiment de la paternité se développa chez Goriot jusqu'à la déraison. Il reporta ses affections trompées par la mort sur ses deux filles, qui d'abord satisfirent pleinement tous ses sentiments. (p. 921)

Anastasia and Delphine receive "[un] dévouement irréflecti" (p. 921). In their presence he is "drugged": listening to a lover's quarrel between Rastignac and Delphine Goriot "avait le sourire fixe d'un theriaki [opium smoker] . . ." (p. 1024). He places his daughters "au rang des anges, et nécessairement au-dessus de lui, le pauvre homme, il aimait jusqu'au mal qu'elles lui faisaient" (p. 922). Along with the masochistic aspect of his devotion we can see that this passion has pseudo-religious overtones. As he is dying, Goriot again unconsciously substitutes his paternal passion for Christian orthodoxy when he cries: "Pour un père, l'enfer est d'être sans enfants" (p. 1066). This forcing of natural attachments beyond all natural bounds drives Goriot to his own deathbed; it had already rendered him incapable of understanding or sympathizing with anything outside his own obsession. When Rastignac announces that Vautrin is an escaped convict and that the Taillefer son is dead Goriot replies: "Eh bien! qu'est-ce que ça nous fait? . . . Je dine avec ma fille. . . ." (p. 1021). Finally, as he is at the very moment of death, Goriot recognizes not only that his exaggerated, monstrously distorted love could never have been reciprocated, but that it has even contributed to the present misery of his daughters' lives. Nevertheless, he is convinced that he has been redeemed: "Moi seul est coupable, mais coupable par amour. . . . J'ai bien expié le péché de les trop aimer" (p. 1071).

The fatal excess of Goriot's paternal feeling is evident to every reader. The moral judgment passed by Balzac is perhaps not so easily discernible. There

is, of course, the possibility that Balzac fully concurred with the Goriot-as-innocent-victim view. Another opinion could be the one formulated by Donald Adamson:

It would seem more reasonable to assert that *Goriot* belongs to a long series of cautionary tales, of which the two greatest examples (apart from *Goriot* itself) are *La Recherche de l'absolu* and *Le Chef d'oeuvre inconnu*. Far from being an example of conduct, Goriot's case, like that of other passionate characters, serves as a warning.<sup>3</sup>

The "caution" and possibly the lesson learned by a young man in this "education novel" appears dramatically in the scene of Vautrin's arrest. Trompe-la-Mort earns his name, dominating and moderating his awesome energy and so saving himself from certain death. At that moment, Vautrin adheres to Balzac's conviction that each individual has a limited amount of "énergie vitale" which once spent can never be replaced. Goriot's entire life is an extended "caution," for he has observed no such restraint. His fate is a total expenditure to the point of self-destruction:

"Les pères doivent toujours donner pour être heureux. Donner toujours, c'est ce qui fait qu'on est père" (p. 1023).

When sentiment becomes passion it defies the laws of natural balance and exposes its victim to fatal risk. Passion illuminates and then consumes.

While *Dombey and Son* has not endeared itself to the reading public at large as have *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Great Expectations*, and even *A Tale of Two Cities*, it has been termed "the first fully realized work of Dickens' maturity."<sup>4</sup> As was the case with *Le Père Goriot*, Dickens's novel offers distinct formal innovation, for *Dombey and Son* marks the first time that Dickens planned each installment before he started to write. John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson consider *Dombey and Son* "a new departure for Dickens . . . [in that it is] . . . a novel founded upon a conflict."<sup>5</sup> In assessing the place of *Dombey and Son* in the evolution of Dickens's whole literary production, Sylvia Manning concludes that this novel signals a critical transition, for in it Dickens "seems to be trying out types and configurations that will be developed more fully in later novels."<sup>6</sup>

The plot of *Dombey and Son* hinges on the character of Paul Dombey, a wealthy and powerful London merchant whose blind obsession with riches and their dynastic perpetuation affects the fate of everyone with whom he comes in contact. The novel is organized around the polarity established between Dombey, representative of prideful infatuation with wealth, and Florence, his loving but neglected daughter, the embodiment of human affection and natural feelings. All characters in the novel are associated with either one or the other of these two antithetical values.<sup>7</sup> Dombey's wife dies in the first chapter of the book; his son and heir dies a third of the way through the novel; and for the latter two thirds we are witness to his willful and

ruthless efforts to counter this loss. By his "purchase" of a second wife, Edith, an impoverished gentlewoman and a haughty, enigmatic beauty, Dombey will attempt to assure the succession of the firm and to advance his grasp on society. More significantly still, Dombey systematically and implacably rejects the warmth and comfort which his daughter Florence eagerly wishes to bestow. She is banished from his presence, persecuted, and finally exiled from his home. In the end, of course, pride falls. The House of Dombey, in the human sense of the term, is rescued by the faithful Florence and the endless source of humane love she symbolizes.

Dickens's master plan for *Dombey and Son* was disclosed in a letter to his friend and confidant John Forster:

I design to show Mr. D. with that one idea of the Son taking firmer and firmer possession of him, and swelling and bloating his pride to a prodigious extent.<sup>8</sup>

In every discussion of *Dombey and Son* this statement has been rephrased by reviewers and critics, each time with a slight change revealing individual interpretation. In the *Athenaeum* of October 31, 1846, Dickens's contemporaries read that:

[Dombey] . . . is to personate one of those representatives of a long commercial line in whose contracted and exclusive minds selfishness takes the quality of reflecting the single figure of its own commercial importance.<sup>9</sup>

However there still seems to be an ambiguity both in Dickens's original formulation of his novel's design and in evaluations since his day. If the question could be answered it would help us to penetrate the character of Paul Dombey and to discover the true quality of "the warp of his mind"<sup>10</sup> and the "monstrous delusion of his life" (ch. xlvii, p. 646). In his biography of Dickens, Forster tells us that *Dombey and Son* "was to do with Pride what its predecessor [*Martin Chuzzlewit*] had done with Selfishness. But this limit he soon overpassed. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

To some the "real villain of *Dombey and Son* is the soullessness of the new business world. . . ."<sup>12</sup> In two statements which may be contradictory John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson assert that " . . . the overshadowing, menacing moral [of *Dombey and Son* is] that Pride of Wealth must have a Fall" and also that " . . . the heart of the design . . . is the opposition of pride and love, with Mr. Dombey as the meeting point."<sup>13</sup> J. Hillis Miller sees the central problem of *Dombey and Son* as a problem faced by all the characters: "how to break through the barriers separating one from the world and from other people. . . . [The] protagonists differ from the other characters only in the completeness of their isolation." I would agree with this but suggest that the problem arose not because "what is outside each person is alien and unfriendly,"<sup>14</sup> but rather because some characters refuse to abandon their isolation and thereby accede to the world of natural, loving feeling. Sylvia Manning considers that "in *Dombey and Son* Dickens develops to its fullest

the vision of rigidity as the repudiation of womanly values but he still sees this denaturing as individual sin and not yet as social malaise." Elsewhere she terms this "repudiation of womanly values" "the flight from woman"<sup>15</sup> and treats it as an element of the theme of "anti-vitalism."

To see Dombey as the typically ruthless business man, personifying the evils of commerce, surely would be simplistic. His role as a "pecuniary Duke of York" (ch. i, p. 9) is only the most visible manifestation of his general failure as a human being. Likewise, as John Forster has already implied, Pride is the effect and not the cause of Dombey's obsessive isolation. Dombey is humbled, ruined, and brought to the brink of suicide through his inability to go beyond himself, to yield to the natural community of human affection.

The effects of the "prodigious extent" to which Paul Dombey's pride will be "bloated" declare themselves most violently and ominously after the death of his son. In an effort to relieve his pain, Dombey, accompanied by Major Bagstock, his toadying and snobbish friend, travels by rail to Leamington. At the station Dombey encounters Toodles, a railroad worker, husband of Paul's old nurse. The sudden reappearance of this man, who wears crepe in discreet mourning for the dead Dombey child, brings on a violent rush of resentment in Dombey. Young Paul had drawn to him and had in turn responded to all the characters of the novel, such as Mrs. Toodles and most importantly Florence, who offer the deep comfort and warmth of human love. The entire passage concerning this railway journey brilliantly and vigorously exposes Paul Dombey's thoughts at this moment when his life's purpose seems mocked:

To think that his lost child, who was to have divided with him his riches, and his projects, and his power, and allied with whom he was to have shut out all the world as with a double door of gold, should have let in such a herd to insult him with their knowledge of his defeated hopes, and their boasts of claiming community of feeling with himself, so far removed: if not of having crept into the place wherein he would have lorded it, alone!

The relentless "monotony" of the railroad's course corresponds to the "unchanging" hardness of Dombey's soul. As he is oblivious of the countryside through which the train rushes, so is he blind to the natural world of human love. His bitterness and futile anger are evoked through powerful images linking the grinding might of the railroad engine with "a type of triumphant monster, Death" — Death, "the remorseless monster," "the indomitable monster." To Dombey, the landscape is "... a wilderness of blighted plans and gnawing jealousies." The words *ashes*, *distorted*, *blackened*, *ruin*, *decay*, and *dust* reinforce Dickens's suggestions of the denial of the natural processes of life which, even more than the death of Little Paul, threatens to "blight" his father's existence (ch. xx, pp. 280-283).

The spectacle of physical devastation brings no moral awakening. Months later, Dombey will imperiously claim to his new wife Edith: "Dombey and



Son know neither time, nor place, nor season, but bear them all down' " (ch. xxxvii, p. 526).<sup>16</sup> Indeed, one of the most sinister elements of Dombey's revolt is his utter disregard for time, the natural force. He strives to accelerate time by delivering his son into the hands of Dr. Blimber, an educator who deprives the boy of childhood and health as he feverishly works to hurry the maturation process — the Son must assume his commercial role with all possible (or impossible) speed.

The most momentous example of Dombey's insistent blindness to nature, though, is his denial of his daughter. The terms in which Dickens describes Dombey's unyielding coldness leave no doubt about his moral stance: "[Dombey] rejected the angel and took up with the tormenting spirit crouching in his bosom" (ch. xx, p. 283). (A comparison with Goriot's attitude toward his daughters is striking. The retired vermicelli dealer had referred to them as "mes anges." His unnatural worship of these false "angels" only brought his damnation.)

As if to reinforce the obvious religious overtones of this judgment of Dombey, Dickens speaks elsewhere of the "moody, stubborn, sullen demon that possessed him" (ch. x I, p. 562). Christian terminology and Romantic yearning for innocence merge as Dickens describes the experience of a minor "good" character, Toots, who stands on the shore at Brighton and "hears the requiem of little Dombey on the waters, rising and falling in the lulls of their eternal madrigal in praise of Florence" (ch. x li, p. 577).

Before the end of *Le Père Goriot*, Goriot has been buried in a pauper's grave in an abandoned cemetery. The last page of the novel is devoted to Rastignac who defiantly alerts Paris to his assault. At the end of Dickens's novel *Dombey*, unlike Goriot, will be redeemed. The last page of *Dombey and Son* leaves us with an inspiring tableau. Significantly, the family is reconciled by the sea shore and the "white haired gentleman" lovingly caresses his grandchild, "little Florence." Dynastic perpetuation of *Pride of Wealth* has been replaced by the perpetuation of affection from one generation to another. *Dombey and Son* is *Dombey and Daughter*.

Balzac had told us that Goriot would be crushed by the "char de la civilisation" which he compared to the "Juggernaut" or Hindu idol which was drawn through the streets in religious festivals and under whose wheels fervent worshippers were often crushed. The exact image appears in *Dombey and Son* when John Carker tells Edith that Dombey is:

"... the slave of his own greatness, and goes yoked to his own triumphal car like a beast of burden with no idea on earth but that it is behind him and is to be drawn on, over everything and through everything." (ch. xlv, p. 628)

Goriot is destroyed by the Juggernaut but Dombey is *his own* Juggernaut. The symmetrical contrast is clearly perceptible. Nature is affronted in both

cases: by Goriot's refusal to abide by nature's dictates for survival and by Dombey's refusal to yield to the community of natural affection.

## II

Two magnificent character studies, two "stories" are completed but we can still ponder a number of questions — implicit and often painfully explicit — raised by these two men, each obsessed with an unnatural passion. To what extent was this obsessive passion an individual fate and to what extent was it induced by factors in society? This eternal diagram of an individual at odds with forces beyond himself is complicated in *Dombey and Son* and *Le Père Goriot* by problems debated with particular energy and anxiety in the nineteenth century: the question of whether or not social morals were a secular or a religious responsibility and the problem of whether or not the betterment of society would emanate from the individual or would be imposed from without.

In *Le Père Goriot* the relationship of the individual to society is complex to say the least. Goriot himself was convinced that his paternal affection was sanctioned by society and essential to its preservation. On his deathbed he exhorts Rastignac to:

"Envoyez-les [his daughters] chercher par la gendarmerie, de force! la justice est pour moi, tout est pour moi, la nature, le code civil. . . . La patrie périra si les pères sont foulés aux pieds. La société, le monde roulent sur la paternité, tout croule si les enfants n'aiment pas leurs pères." (p. 1070)

But society, as it is so constituted, can also destroy the individual outright. Such is the fate of Mme de Beauséant and Goriot, according to Rastignac. There is no question but that on one level Balzac admired the "outré" quality of his "hommes [et femmes] à passion." However this is to be explained — by Balzac's temperament or by the prevailing Romantic modes — it is also evident that Balzac feared rampant individualism pursuing egotistical obsessions to unnatural ends; to him it posed a threat to the family, which he came to view as the inviolable unit of a stable society. Considered in this perspective, the debate over whether Rastignac or Goriot is the main character of *Le Père Goriot* goes to the heart of the "ethical schizophrenia" of the novel.<sup>17</sup> Goriot's passionate consumption by an exaggerated natural instinct is sublime, but Rastignac's trimming accommodation to the inevitable "forces of nature" is the overriding ethical mean of *La Comédie humaine*.<sup>18</sup> Society's flaws are extensively enumerated and even vigorously condemned, but at the same time the hint of fate is everywhere. Donald Adamson's judgment of Goriot is that he was neither good nor bad:

. . . he is a force of Nature, and we must admire him as we admire a volcano, as some natural phenomenon the destructiveness of which we deplore, but cannot condemn.<sup>19</sup>



Balzac himself had suggested as much when he first described Goriot's torments:

Ces questions tiennent de près à bien des injustices sociales. Peut-être est-il dans la nature humaine de tout faire supporter à qui souffre tout par humilité, vraie, par faiblesse ou par indifférence. (p. 860)

*Le Père Goriot* displays a view of society as an entity distinct from the individual. Moreover, the two are in adversarial positions. *Dombey and Son* does not seem to have a similar conception although Dickens's later novels definitely evolve in that direction. Dombey the heartless merchant is criticized but Dombey the neglectful father and tyrannical husband is thoroughly denounced. Therefore, when Dombey is redeemed, his rescue will be effected on a personal level.

Dickens does suggest parallels between Dombey's sins and the sins of society. In a lengthy, compelling passage just before Edith flees to France and precipitates the downfall of Dombey's business and domestic life, Dickens asks:

Was Mr. Dombey's master-vice that ruled him so inexorably an unnatural characteristic? It might be worthwhile sometimes to inquire what Nature is, and how men work to change her, and whether in the enforced distortion so produced, it is not natural to be unnatural. Coop any son or daughter of our mighty mother within narrow range, and bind the prisoner to one idea . . . and what is nature to the willing captive who has never risen up upon the wings of a free mind — drooping and useless soon — to see her in her comprehensive truth.

The "noxious particles" of physical disease can be scientifically discovered, Dickens tells us. If, in a similar way, this "moral pestilence" hovering over London which

in the eternal laws of outraged Nature, is inseparable from [the noxious particles] could be made discernible too, how terrible the revelation! Then should we see depravity, impiety, drunkenness, theft, murder, and a long train of nameless sins against the natural affections and repulsions of mankind overhanging the devoted spots and creeping on to blight the innocent and spread contagions among the pure. . . . Unnatural humanity!<sup>20</sup>

The "contagion" brings "social retributions which are ever pouring down and ever coming thicker!" Dickens eloquently suggests that if men could see these "stumbling blocks of their own making, which are but specks of dust upon the path between them and eternity, [then they] would apply themselves like creatures of one common origin owing one duty to the Father of one family, and tending to one common end to make the world a better place."

What all this has to do with the "monstrous delusion" of Paul Dombey is apparent at the end of the passage:

Not the less bright and blest would be that day for rousing some, who never have looked out upon the world of human life around them, to a knowledge of their own relation to it, and for making them acquainted with a perversion of nature in their own contracted sympathies and estimation as great. . . . But no such day had ever dawned for Mr. Dombey. . . . (ch. xlvii, pp. 646-648)

Dombey's "course" is averted before irretrievable disaster. This salvation is due partly to the persistent but faint voice of conscience within him but primarily to the tenacious vitality of Florence's love. When Dickens wrote *Dombey and Son* he had not yet dismissed the efficacy of personal morality as an instrument for social improvement. Individual charity can lead to collective redemption not only in religious terms but in concretely social terms as well.

In the sixteen years after *Le Père Goriot* and in the twenty-four years following *Dombey and Son* Balzac and Dickens proceed to expand and enrich their work. Their fiction mirrors the distinctive genius of each man and these two creative transpositions of a world will correspond in exciting and profound ways.<sup>21</sup> The axis of the characters of Goriot and Dombey is a discordant relation to nature. Through their treatment of this identical theme, *Le Père Goriot* and *Dombey and Son* provide us with a unique means of perceiving these correspondences and of savoring the divergences.

#### NOTES

1. Honoré de Balzac, *Le Père Goriot* (Paris: Gallimard Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Tome II), p. 1065. Further quotations from *Le Père Goriot* will be indicated in parentheses in the text.

2. Léon-François Hoffmann, "Les Métaphores animales dans *Le Père Goriot*," *L'Année balzacienne* (1963), 91-103.

3. Donald Adamson, "*Le Père Goriot*: Notes toward a Reassessment," *Symposium*, XIX (1965), 101-114.

4. Grahame Smith, *Dickens, Money and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), p. 103.

5. John Butt and Kathleen Tillotson, *Dickens at Work* (Fair Lawn, N. J.: Essential Books, Inc., 1958), p. 96.

6. Sylvia Bank Manning, *Dickens as Satirist* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), p. 88.

7. The structure of the imagistic network which elaborates this confrontation has been well discussed by William Axton in his article "Tonal Unity in *Dombey and Son*," *PMLA*, 78 (September 1963), 341-348. Briefly, *Dombey and Son* contains a varied system of symbols pertaining to fluidity and fecundity: the sea, the river, Madeira wine, etc. The central point of all such imagery is the power of love, the natural and therefore good life force. Conversely, *Dombey and Son* also abounds in figures of speech in which ice, metal, etc., symbols of unnatural, obdurate rigidity, are featured. As would be expected, these images are associated with Mr. Dombey and his moral satellites: Edith, Mrs. Skewton, Bagstock, Mrs. Pipchin, Blimber, and Carker.

8. John Forster, *The Life of Charles Dickens* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), Vol. II, pp. 310-311.

9. Butt and Tillotson, pp. 93-94.

10. Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), ch. xl, p. 629. Further quotations from *Dombey and Son* will be indicated in parentheses in the text.

11. Forster, II, 309.

12. Harry Stone, "The Novel as Fairy Tale: Dickens' *Dombey and Son*," *English Studies*, 47 (February 1966), 1-27.

13. Butt and Tillotson, pp. 94 and 96.

14. J. Hillis Miller, *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), p. 146.

15. Manning, pp. 87 and 93.

16. This passage is one of several in *Dombey and Son* dealing with the railroad. Dickens's treatment of this recent phenomenon is complex and important for it raises the issue of his view of industrial progress and its effect on the lives of Englishmen. In *Dombey and Son* Dickens seems to have an ambivalent attitude toward the railroad: as a force for change it is a potential source of social amelioration, but at the same time the railroad unquestionably destroys much that Dickens cherishes. The parallel between Balzac's use of the Juggernaut image and Dickens's portrayal of the railroad would be interesting to explore. Stylistically the railroad passages show Dickens's superb manipulation and deployment of fantastical images, particularly when studied in conjunction with the hallucinatory passage describing Carker's voyage by coach across France. Was Dickens "a desperate surrealist tormented by fear-ridden dreams," as Arnold Hauser (*The Social History of Art*, Vol. IV, p. 128) claims?

17. Catherine Savage, "The Romantic *Père Goriot*," *Studies in Romanticism*, V (Winter 1966), 104-112.

18. In a deliberate move to draw a sharp distinction between Goriot's fate and that of Rastignac, Balzac chose the same image of the wheel of fortune or of the "char de la civilisation" to predict the course of his young hero:

Sans trop s'expliquer les moyens, [Rastignac] devinait par avance que, dans le jeu compliqué des intérêts de ce monde, il devait s'accrocher à un rouage pour se trouver en haut de la machine, et il se sentait la force d'en enrayer la roue. (p. 954)

19. Adamson, p. 108.

20. The city is simply the last example of many points in *Dombey and Son* and *Le Père Goriot* which could be studied further. Alexander Welsh's recent book *The City of Dickens* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) discusses this very passage and contends that *Dombey and Son* marks the beginning of Dickens's ambiguous attitude toward the modern city.

21. For a recent treatment of the general topic of Balzac and Dickens, see Bernard N. Schilling, "Balzac, Dickens and 'This Harsh World,'" *Adam* (1969), 109-122.